

Listening and Empathic responds

Listening depend on your ability as a pharmacist providing your patients with sense that they understood is a crucial part of your effectiveness in communicating with them. Listening well involves both understanding the content of the information being provided and the feeling of being conveyed.

Skills are required for effective listening included:

1. Summarizes.
2. Paraphrasing.
3. Empathic response.
4. Nonverbal attending.

Summarizing:

When a patient is providing information such as during a medication history interview, it is necessary for you to try to summarize the critical pieces of information. Summarizing allows you to be sure you understand accurately all that the patient conveyed and allows the patient to add new information that may have been forgotten.

Paraphrasing:

It condenses aspects of content as well as some superficial recognition of the patient's attitudes or feelings.

Empathic responding:

It is sensitive ability and willingness to understand the client's thoughts, feelings, and struggles from client's point of view.

Many of messages patients send to you involve the way they feel about their illnesses or life situations. If you are able to communicate back to a patient that you understand these feeling, then a caring, trusting

relationship can be established. The importance of empathy in helping relationship has been elucidated most eloquently.

Note: the main difference between an empathic response and a paraphrase is that empathy serves primarily as a reflection of the patients feeling rather than focusing on content of the communication.

Falsely reassuring response may be used even when the patient is facing a situation of real threat, such as a terminal illness. We may feel helpless in such a situation and use false reassurance to protect ourselves from the emotional involvement of listening and trying to understand the patient's feelings. In addition to using empathic responses, two other attitudes or messages must convey to the patient if trust is to be established:

1. You must be genuine, or sincere, in the relationship.
2. Acceptance the patient as an autonomous, worthwhile person. If you convey an ongoing positive feeling for patients, they may be more open with you since they do not fear that they are being judged.

The importance of empathy:

1. It helps patients come to trust you as someone who cares about their welfare.
2. It facilitates the patient's own problem-solving ability.
3. Patients may begin to feel more in control by understanding their feeling better.
4. Patient may also feel freer to explore possible solutions or different ways of coping with their own problems.

Nonverbal attending:

This skill is important for effective communication and many requirements for this skill are:

1. Establishing eye contact while talking to patients.
2. Learning toward them with no physical barriers between you.
3. Having a relaxed posture all help to put the patient at ease and show your concern.
4. Head nods and encouragements to talk.
5. Tone of voice that conveys that you are trying to understand the persons feeling.
6. Establishing a sense of privacy.
7. Conveying that you have time to listen.

Problems in establishing helping relationships:

1. Stereotyping.
2. Depersonalizing.
3. Controlling behaviors

Stereotyping:

Communication problems may exist because of negative stereotypes held by health care practitioners that affect the quality of their communication like feeling toward elderly patient, psychiatric, chronic pain, or an AIDs patient.

Depersonalizing:

Some patient is accompanied by other family person, as if elderly patient is accompanied by an adult child. Therefore, this type of communication occurs with accompanier rather than with patient himself and this lead to rigid communication rather than pharmacist-patient dialogue.

4. Controlling behaviors:

When health care providers do things that reduce the patient's sense of control over decisions that are made regarding treatment, they may

actually be reducing the effectiveness of the therapies they prescribe. Intervention to increase levels of patient participation and control in the provider-patients relationship have yielded positive results that include improved clinical and quality of life outcomes.

Suggested questions:

- 1- Enumerate the requirements of Nonverbal attending.**
- 2- What is the importance of empathy?**
- 3- Enumerate the Problems in establishing helping relationships.**
- 4- Enumerate the Skills that are required for effective listening.**
- 5- What does Empathic responding mean?**